

Commissioners:

JEFF C. WHEELAND
Chairman

ERNEST P. LARSON
Vice Chairman

TONY R. MUSSARE
Secretary



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**Minutes of the Meeting of
March 7, 2013
Board Room, Executive Plaza
Pine Street, Williamsport**

Commissioner Wheeland - Present
Commissioner Larson - Present
Commissioner Mussare - Present

Solicitor Sees - Present

1.0 OPERATIONS

1.1 CONVENE COMMISSIONERS MEETING. Mr. Wheeland convened the Commissioners Meeting 10:02 a.m.

1.2 APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved the minutes of the previous meeting as they are recorded.

1.3 RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY). Mr. Wheeland opened the floor to public comment on agenda items only, and none were received. Mr. Wheeland explained that public comment on the reassessment would be taken during item 4.2.

Mr. Wheeland recessed the Commissioners' Meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Mr. Wheeland opened the public hearing for the TVMA CDBG competitive grant application.

Kristin McCloughlin of SEDA COG presented details of the Tiadaghton Valley Municipal Authority CDBG competitive grant application.

The floor was opened to public comments, and none were received. Mr. Wheeland closed the public hearing at 10:07 a.m.

Mr. Wheeland reconvened the Commissioners' Meeting at 10:07 a.m.

2.0 ACTION ITEMS

- 2.1 ADOPT RESOLUTION 2013-06. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), adopted Resolution 2013-06 to submit application to PA DCED on behalf of the TVMA for a CDBG competitive grant.
- 2.2 APPROVE AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT WITH OLD LYCOMING TOWNSHIP. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved amendment to subrecipient agreement with Old Lycoming Township for the 2009 CDBG.
- 2.3 APPROVE AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT WITH YWCA. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved amendment to subrecipient agreement with the YWCA for the 2011 CDBG.
- 2.4 APPROVE PSA WITH SEDA COG. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved professional service agreement with SEDA COG for 2012 CDBG services.
- 2.5 PROCLAIM RED CROSS MONTH . A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), proclaimed March as Red Cross Month in Lycoming County.
- 2.6 APPROVE GRANT APPLICATION TO EDA. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved the grant application to EDA for sanitary sewer rehab in the amount of \$1,250,000.
- 2.7 APPROVE GRANT APPLICATION TO EDA. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved the grant application to EDA for sanitary sewer rehab and flood resilience in the amount of \$2,000,000.
- 2.8 APPROVE PSA WITH KARL BALDYS. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved professional service agreement with Karl Baldys for Zoning Solicitor.
- 2.9 APPROVE PSA WITH PALMETTO POSTING. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved professional service agreement with Palmetto Posting, Inc.
- 2.10 APPROVE AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT WITH RECREATION AUTHORITY. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved amendment to agreement with Lycoming County Recreation Authority.

2.11 APPROVE TDA CHANGE. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), approved TDA change - in Conservation District - addition of one part time temporary agriculture conservation technician.

Mr. Wheeland recessed the Commissioners' Meeting at 10:38 a.m.

3.0 SALARY BOARD

3.1 CONVENE SALARY BOARD. Deputy Controller Miller was present.

3.2 CONSERVATION DISTRICT - A motion by Mrs. Miller and seconded by Mr. Larson and passed (4-0), approved Matthew E. Johnson as part time Agriculture Conservation Technician - Pay grade 6 - \$14.74/hour effective 3/11/13, not to exceed 1,000 hours annually.

3.3 PRISON - A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-1, Miller), approved the promotion of Christopher J. Ebner as full time Bail/Release Program Manager - Pay grade 10 - \$62,209.35/annually effective 3/3/13.

3.4 ADJOURN SALARY BOARD. A motion by Mrs. Miller and seconded by Mr. Larson and passed (4-0), adjourned the Salary Board at 10:39 a.m.

4.0 BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

4.1 CONVENE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS. Mr. Wheeland convened the Board of Assessment Appeals at 10:39 a.m.

4.2 RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON REASSESSMENT. Mr. Wheeland opened the floor to public comment on the proposed reassessment.

Cassie Tompkins, Chief Assessor provided the following comments:

"Lycoming County last reassessed the entire county in 2004 - nine years ago. Over that time, trends in the market have caused property values to become inconsistent and unfair. While one neighborhood may be growing, another one is in decline. This results in taxpayers paying more or less than their fair share of the tax burden.

Studies conducted annually by the State Tax Equalization Board show a disparity between the county assessed values and recent sale prices. This brings on more appeals which in turn leads to a further lack of uniformity.

To equalize the tax base and ensure that property owners are only paying their fair share of the taxes, assessment values must be at 100 percent of current market value and there must be

uniformity between all properties of similar characteristics and value.

A county-wide reassessment is the only means that counties within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have to reestablish consistency and a fair and equitable distribution of the tax burden for all property owners."

Mr. Wheeland referenced an article that the Center for Rural Pennsylvania did in 2010 entitled "Pennsylvania County Property Reassessment: Impact on Local Government Finances and the Local Economy" and read the conclusion from that document:

"This study found that counties conducting countywide reassessments on a regular, reoccurring schedule achieve multiple benefits for the county. Reassessments enable counties to derive more tax revenue per mill, thereby lowering tax rates and decreasing the overall residential tax burden. Additionally, countywide reassessments were shown to improve property taxation equity and uniformity across the county.

For the county residents, countywide reassessments are beneficial because they lead to improved local economic conditions, such as higher employment, higher housing values, and higher median incomes.

This study also showed that all the benefits of countywide reassessment are more significant for rural counties than for urban counties."

Mr. Wheeland said that Pennsylvania is not one of the 44 states that requires regular, cyclical reassessments.

Mrs. Tompkins said that the time line for the reassessment would begin with January 1, 2014 for base year taxes and the new values would be effective January 1, 2015.

Dr. Vince Matteo from the Chamber of Commerce offered that the Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee unanimously endorses the reassessment. He added that the Chamber understands it is about fairness and not about raising taxes. He emphasized that the concensus of the Board of Directors of the Chamber hopes the Board will consider two things: the first being that that it should be taken into consideration the artificial inflation of property values due to the natural gas industry, and the second is that the Board should consider appointing an independent Board of Assessment Appeals so that the process is truly independent and not related to party.

Mr. Wheeland responded relating to item one that there is the reason why the state should require reassessments occurring on a regular basis. He added that the appointment of an auxiliary Board of Assessment has been an ongoing discussion, and it needs to be discussed with the Solicitor.

Mr. Mussare commented that the Board of Commissioners shares the two concerns raised by the Chamber.

Scott Miller of Tucker Street explained that he has three comps to show that his property value has decreased. He added that because Sheridan school will be closed, his property value will further decrease. He does support the reassessment.

Glenn Williams of Old Lycoming Township stated his views on reassessment, saying that it takes into consideration the age of the home but not the age of the owner. In the 50 years he owned his property, he has seen lots of reassessments and he never saw his taxes go down. He said an assessment is not the fair market value of the property. He added that the taxes of those on fixed incomes should not increase.

Mr. Wheeland responded that the Board supports assessment reform and advocates for this.

Jim Carpenter of Williamsport said that he is glad to see the Commissioners are doing a reassessment.

4.2 ADOPT BOARD OF ASSESSMENT RESOLUTION 2013-1. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), adopted the Board of Assessment Resolution 2013-1 authorizing a reassessment.

4.3 ADJOURN BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), adjourned the Board of Assessment Appeals at 11:01 a.m.

Mr. Wheeland reconvened the Commissioners' Meeting at 11:01 a.m.

5.0 REPORTS / INFORMATION ITEMS.

5.1 Mya Toon announced that LCRMS is requesting bids for a used hydraulic excavator.

5.2 Kristin McClaughlin of SEDA COG presented the 2013 CDBG project review.

6.0 PUBLIC COMMENT. Mr. Wheeland opened the floor to public comment and the following was received:

Glenn Williams of Old Lycoming Township offered that he uses the Pine Creek Rail Trail and commends the County for doing this. He also suggested that it should be expanded to Williamsport and Muncy.

7.0 NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING. Mr. Wheeland announced the next regularly scheduled meeting as a work session on Tuesday, March 12, 2012.

8.0 ADJOURN COMMISSIONERS' MEETING. A motion by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Mussare and passed (3-0), adjourned the Commissioners' Meeting at 11:17 a.m.